

Positive Workplace Cultures

AGENCY PLANNING WORKBOOK

Version 2 – May 2021



Practical ideas to support agencies to
create positive workplace cultures

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Introduction

The Positive Workplace Cultures Programme is designed to support leaders in the public sector to create workplaces that are inclusive, diverse and safe for all workers.

As good employers we want to protect our workers from psychosocial harm. However we are not simply aiming to create workplaces where inappropriate behaviour such as bullying and harassment are not tolerated, we are aiming to create workplace cultures where workers feel supported the moment they walk in the door, trust that their leaders 'walk the talk', and feel that business priorities are balanced with their wellbeing needs.

The Positive and Safe Workplaces Model Standards released by the Public Service Commissioner in August 2019 provide a platform from where we can springboard. Agencies should prioritise the standards in the first instance, putting your initial efforts on determining any gaps and addressing these.

Beyond the model standards, we want agencies to aspire to create positive workplace cultures that are leading; not just the state sector, but all of New Zealand.

This workbook introduces eight core elements to help agencies identify areas of focus to achieve long-term cultural change. Designed to practically support agencies with their planning with a focus on positive workplace cultures, the workbook pulls information, suggestions and ideas from various sources including good practice guidance, research and the Positive and Safe Workplaces Model Standards themselves.

Today, and throughout the next few months, agencies will have further opportunities to build on these ideas by sharing their own learnings, case studies and ideas.

We recognise that each agency is different and no one approach will work for everyone, but we hope you find some inspiration within the following pages.



Ray Smith and Rebecca Kitteridge.

PART ONE: EMBEDDING THE MODEL STANDARDS

The first priority for agencies is to embed the Positive and Safe Workplaces Model Standards issued by Te Kawa Mataaho – The Public Service Commission (the Commission). It is the expectation of the Commission that all agencies will achieve the standards, so you are encouraged to focus your initial efforts in these areas.

A summary of the model standards is provided below, however agencies should refer to the full model standards for further information and important context. These are available on the Commission's website: <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/SSC-Site-Assets/IES/Model-Standards-Positive-and-Safe-Workplaces.pdf>

Providing Strong Leadership

- Leaders provide regular and clear statements about their commitment to creating and maintaining a safe and respectful work environment and their expectations of people's behaviour at work.
- Leaders role model positive and productive behaviours at work.
- There are open discussions about workplace behaviour, wellbeing, inclusion and workload pressures, where people are encouraged to raise any issues.
- Professional development processes support leaders to develop the skills and capabilities associated with positive workplace behaviours.
- Recruitment and promotion processes reward role modelling of positive and productive behaviours at work and recognise the benefits of a diverse workforce..

Fostering Good Working Relationships: Communication

- Organisational policies set out what is, and is not, appropriate work place behaviour, including definitions of: discrimination, racial harassment and sexual harassment from the Human Rights Act 1993 and the Employment Relations Act 2000; and bullying from WorkSafe's Preventing and Responding to Workplace Bullying Guidelines.
- Everyone is aware of their roles and responsibilities, in relation to appropriate behaviour at work. This should be discussed with new people during their induction process and, as appropriate, made clear to members of the public interacting with staff at work.
- Performance expectations and policies are clearly documented and well understood by everyone at work.

Fostering Good Working Relationships: Responding to Concerns

- Organisations have a range of informal and formal ways in which they can receive and respond to concerns about inappropriate behaviour at work. People are aware of these options, and of how to access them.
- Natural justice is respected in all instances.
- Mediation and restorative processes are available for use in appropriate cases.
- Once a concern is raised, organisations give consideration as to whether they have the skills required to respond appropriately or whether it is necessary to seek external specialist support, for example from sexual abuse support organisations.
- There are proportionate disciplinary consequences when inappropriate behaviour at work is confirmed.

Trusted Policies and Procedures

- Organisations have clear and easy to understand policies and procedures on appropriate behaviour at work. These contain descriptions of what behaviour is expected. They also explain how to raise concerns and the range of options for resolution that are available. Together the policies and procedures provide a logical and consistent framework.
- An appropriate mechanism is put in place to ensure that policies are developed and periodically reviewed in a collaborative way with staff.
- Organisations regularly evaluate their own performance in preventing inappropriate behaviour and responding to complaints. This may involve gathering data and consulting with people who are particularly affected.

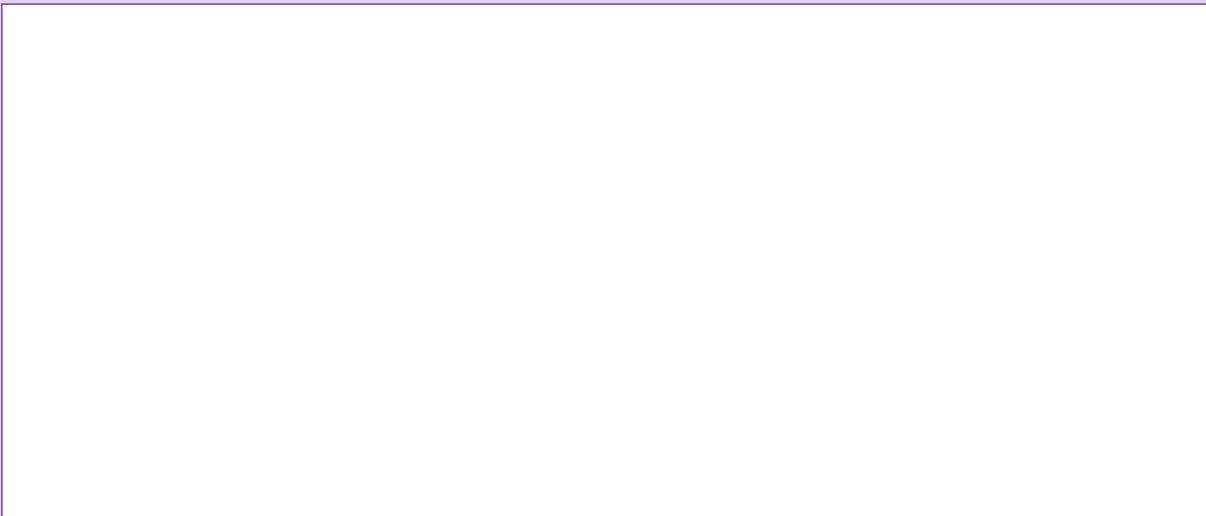
Embedding the model standards

If your agency has reviewed the model standards you may have already identified some priority areas and actions. You may wish to note these below.

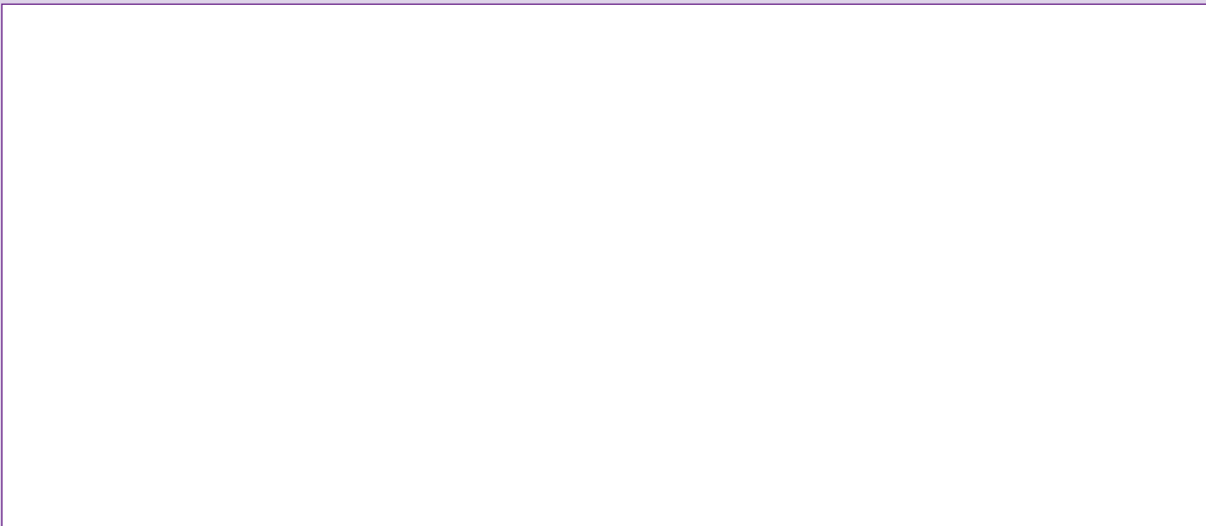
Areas of strength – what we're doing well



Areas of focus – gaps and opportunities



Agreed actions



Notes



PART TWO: POSITIVE WORKPLACE CULTURES

Beyond the model standards, agencies have an opportunity to be leaders, by defining what a positive culture means in your individual context and to focus on shifting your agency towards that defined culture.

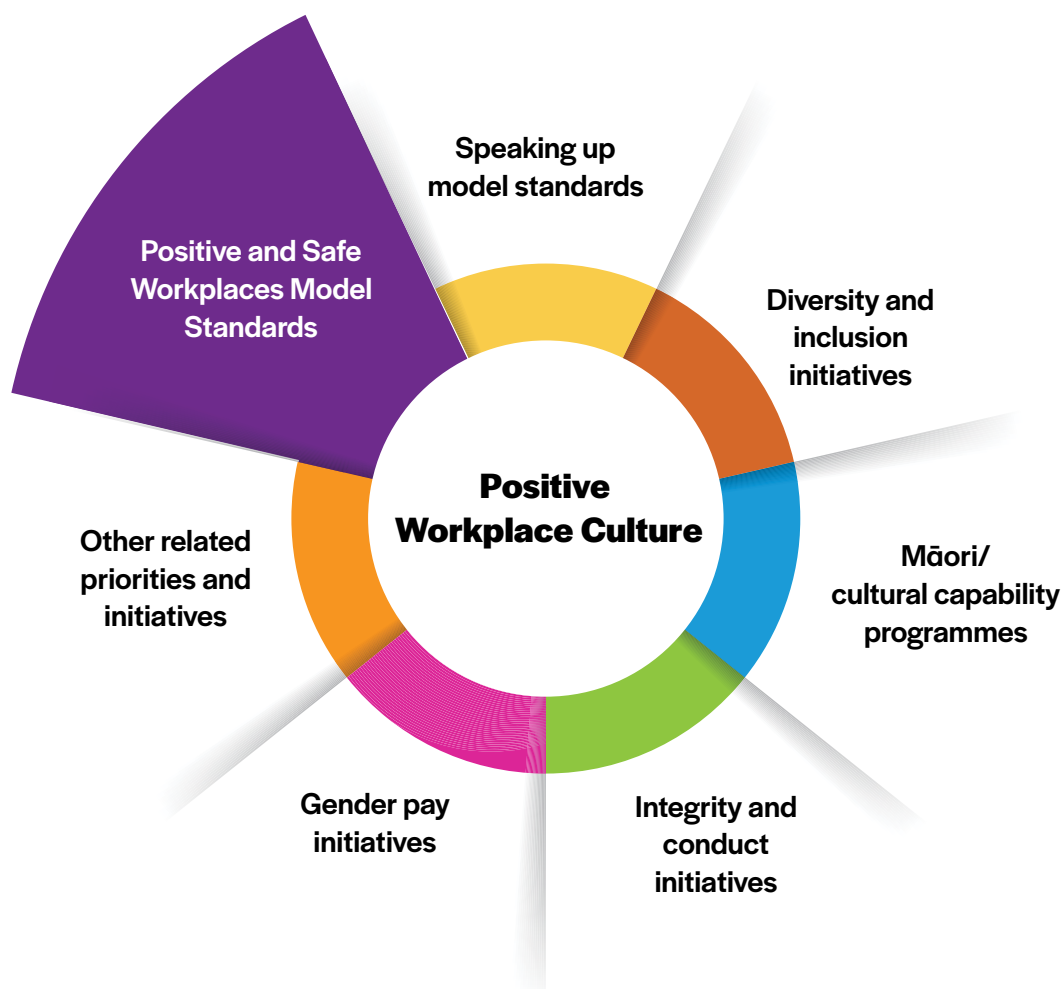
To support with planning, part two of the workbook introduces a culture change framework, supplemented by questions, and, in part three, ideas and suggestions as a starting point.

You'll see that many of the questions, ideas and examples have a greater focus on positive workplace cultures in the context of preventing and crowding out inappropriate behaviour and that causes distress and hinders people from flourishing and reaching their full potential.

However, a positive workplace culture is likely to include many more characteristics such as being diverse and inclusive, supporting people to speak up, encouraging flexible working, being culturally sensitive and safe and there are multiple other characteristics agencies may include.

We encourage agencies to think of this "bigger picture" view as you progress with your planning.

Keep in mind also that this workbook is designed to help leaders responsible for implementing culture change, rather than guidance for individual employees on how to behave.



Elements of Successful Culture Change



This section introduces eight levers (or elements) of successful culture change¹.

Working through the questions in the workbook should help you identify which areas could be top priorities for change, and start to plan actions to make the change.

The diagram on the following page shows how the elements influence each other, together making up your workplace culture.



Shared Vision, Values and Beliefs

Alignment between the agency's strategic objectives and the way in which work is done.



Visible Leadership

Commitment and ability of leaders to drive and model positive behaviours at work.



Communication, Training and Education

Extent to which positive workplace culture is defined, understood, and discussed across agency groups.



Policies, Procedures, and Systems

How operational processes and systems drive and support positive workplace culture.



People Processes

Extent to which people processes are effective in managing inappropriate behaviours and supporting positive workplace cultures.



Worker Engagement, Participation and Voice

How employees are able to participate in activities to define specific behaviours aligned to the desired positive workplace culture and to provide feedback on their employee experience, directly and through representatives (e.g. unions). Including employee perspectives, i.e. their “voice” is also important for all other elements.



Workplace Environment

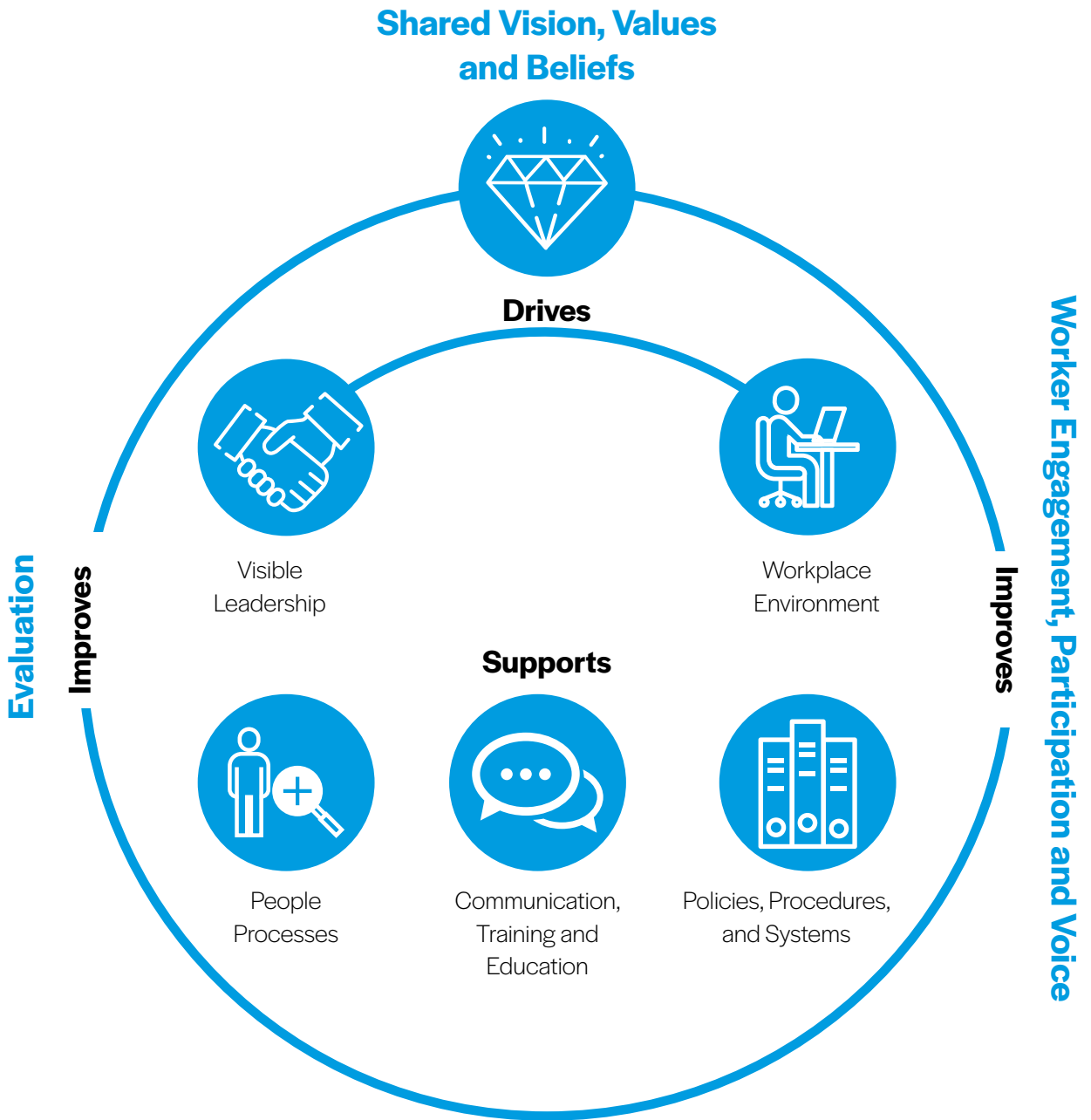
Degree to which a workplace (e.g. organisation and team structure, physical layout, virtual, flexible work arrangements, ways we communicate and share information) enables the desired positive workplace cultures.



Evaluation

The extent to which information is used to inform and evaluate progress towards achieving positive workplace cultures.

¹ Adapted for New Zealand public sector context from Deloitte Inc. Organisational Culture Maturity Model © 2017 (with permission)



Shared Vision, Values and Beliefs



Alignment between the agency's strategic objectives and the way in which work is done.

Across the public service we share a vision of creating positive, safe and inclusive workplace cultures, where people treat one another with respect and work together to deliver for New Zealand and New Zealanders.

It is important for agencies to ensure this vision supports other strategic objectives, and is aligned to the way in which work is done – i.e. your agency's values and beliefs. Our common public service values underpin our agency specific values. Whether we work in a department or in a Crown entity, we must act with a spirit of service to the community and meet the same high standards of integrity and conduct in everything we do.

Some ideas about what great might look like:

- Agency strategic plans recognise positive workplace culture as important and includes continuous development of desired attributes as an objective.
- There is a collective understanding of how positive workplace culture supports the agency's objectives and people are empowered to behave accordingly.
- Core values are collectively held, well-known by employees and stakeholders, illustrated and shared by stories.
- Shared beliefs are embedded in the agency and act as an informal way of aligning behaviours and reinforcing desired culture.

What else would great look like for us?

Questions

Currently, how well do you feel our agency performs in this area? What evidence supports that feeling?

In what ways are the strategic objectives of our agency aligned to the vision of positive workplace cultures?

How well do our communicated and enacted values align, and are they helping to drive positive culture?

Where should we focus our effort?



Visible Leadership

Commitment and ability of leaders to drive and model positive and productive behaviours at work.

Leaders at all levels play an important role in shaping workplace cultures.

Leaders set the tone of an organisation and emphasise the importance of health, wellbeing, dignity and safety. This includes role modelling positive and productive behaviours at work, being visible and available to people, encouraging conversation, listening and providing clear messages. Leaders also play a role in reducing the likelihood that inappropriate behaviours occur, and in managing poor behaviour when it does happen.

Agencies have a role in supporting their leaders to develop the skills and capabilities to create positive workplace cultures.

Some ideas about what great might look like:

- Leaders understand the role of positive workplace culture in agency performance and visibly hold themselves, and others, accountable to positively influence it.
- Consistent modelling and reinforcement of expected behaviours by leaders is evident, and leaders effectively catalyse culture change with employees across all functions and service lines.

What else would great look like for us?

Questions

Currently, how well do you feel our agency performs in this area? What evidence supports that feeling?

How do we as leaders assess the current level of commitment and ability of leaders across our agency to drive and model positive workplace behaviours?

How are we creating opportunities for employees to take leadership in initiatives that support positive culture?

Where should we focus our effort?

Communication, Training and Education



Active and effective communication, and the extent to which positive workplace culture is defined, understood, and discussed across agency groups.

Communication plays a vital role in ensuring everyone has a shared understanding of what is, and what is not, appropriate behaviour at work. Agencies should be able to clearly communicate their definition of a positive workplace, using examples to show what good looks like.

Active and effective communication is important at all levels. For employees, communication competence supports constructive conflict management approaches. Effective manager communication has also been associated with increased work team cooperation.

Agencies' training programmes should include education around understanding and responding to inappropriate behaviour, including (but not limited to): what respectful and inclusive behaviour looks like, encouraging speaking up/upstander¹ training, unconscious bias, diversity and inclusion, cultural capability.

Some ideas about what great might look like:

- The agency has a clear definition of positive workplace culture which is distinctive to the agency and it is understood how this applies across different groups within the agency.
- Positive workplace culture is actively discussed by leadership and within teams.
- Very clear visibility of your agency's definition of a positive workplace for all staff, to allow all people in the agency to contribute to and shape the culture.

What else would great look like for us?

¹ A person who speaks or acts in support of an individual or cause, particularly someone who intervenes on behalf of a person being attacked or bullied.

Questions

Currently, how well do we feel our agency performs in this area? What evidence supports that feeling?

How would we describe the extent to which positive workplace culture is defined, understood, and discussed across agency groups?

How has our agency clearly defined and documented what is, and what is not, appropriate workplace behaviour and how do we ensure this is well understood?

Where should we focus our effort?



Policies, Procedures and Systems

How operational processes and systems drive and support positive workplace culture.

Agencies must ensure that their policies and procedures concerning behaviour at work comply with the law. Policies and procedures should also be clear and easy to understand. They should contain descriptions of what behaviour is expected, how to raise concerns and the range of options for resolution that are available, including restorative options. Agency systems should support these processes.

Mental health and wellbeing policies and processes should focus on how the organisation ensures a mentally safe workplace, including a strong emphasis on fostering good working relationships. These policies should show a commitment to strengthening staff wellbeing and resiliency, and should communicate clearly what support is available for all staff experiencing mental health problems. The public health model of primary, secondary and tertiary approaches has historically been effective.

In the development of any new policy, procedure, process, or system, the impact on culture should be considered and managed appropriately. Ensure you also involve employees and their representatives in the development and regular review of policies.

Some ideas about what great might look like:

- Business processes and systems, including governance and decision making processes, are aligned with desired culture and contribute to achieving strategic outcomes.
- Policies and procedures allow a focus on proactivity – creating the ability to identify risk factors at an early stage, rather than only addressing the consequences.

What else would great look like for us?

Questions

Currently, how well do you feel our agency performs in this area? What evidence supports that feeling?

Have we ensured that our policies, procedures and systems are compliant with law and with the model standards? How do we ensure these are known and understood by managers and staff?

Do our policies, procedures and systems proactively support the development of positive culture? How do we identify opportunities to enhance these further?

Where should we focus our effort?

People Processes



Extent to which people processes are effective in managing inappropriate behaviours and supporting positive workplace culture.

An organisation's people processes play a key role in helping ensure clarity and clear expectations around organisational behaviours. Good people systems and processes also support managers to provide clear expectations of performance and to manage under-performance and misconduct including inappropriate behaviour.

People processes extend to areas of talent management such as recruitment and promotions, recognition and reward. These are all areas where desired behaviours can be reinforced and rewarded through fair and effective practice. Agency talent strategies also include initiatives to produce a more diverse and inclusive workforce and workplaces.

An organisation's human resources (HR) team are also critical in that they typically develop most people processes and provide support and advice to managers in this area.

Leading research suggests that HR teams have a more positive impact on culture when their role includes acting and advocating on behalf of employees, rather than solely acting as protectors of managers and the agency.

Some ideas about what great might look like:

- Culture is key part of your employee value proposition and helps attract and retain employees.
- Agency Talent Programs (including Reward Framework) strategies are aligned to desired culture and enable the identification of current and future organisational talent needs.
- Talent strategies are aligned to desired culture and help identify current and future organisational talent needs.
- Agency-wide, strategic recognition and reward framework, including recognition matched to employee preferences.
- Specific, frequent, employee feedback.

What else would great look like for us?

Questions

Currently, how well do you feel our agency performs in this area? What evidence supports that feeling?

How are we demonstrating our desired culture through our people processes, recognition strategies, and talent practices?

How are we supporting our leaders to be champions of positive culture?

Where should we focus our effort?



Worker Engagement, Participation and Voice

How employees are able to participate in activities to define specific behaviours aligned to the desired positive workplace culture and to provide feedback on their employee experience, directly and through representatives (e.g. unions). Including employee perspectives, (i.e. their “voice”) is also important for all other elements.

While an element on its own, worker engagement is crucial to making improvements in each of the other elements. Agencies should have planned, well known ways to engage staff in the development of policies and procedures for cultural matters that will directly affect them. Under the *Health and Safety at Work Act 2015*, agencies must ensure that workers’ views on health and safety matters are asked for and taken into account, and have clear, effective, and ongoing ways for workers to suggest improvements or raise concerns on a day-to-day basis.

Unions and worker representatives play a key role in representing and supporting workers so they have the tools, skills, opportunities and environment to work in healthy and safe ways¹. The way in which employee relations is handled by your agency is a critical factor in the development of a positive workplace culture. Formal engagement arrangements between agencies and their union(s) can include collaborative working to support more effective partnership in this space.

Employee engagement, participation and inclusion are also important to ensure desired workplace cultures reflect the diverse views and needs of our diverse workforce – i.e. ensuring the “worker voice” is heard. In government agencies there may be different employee led networks such as women, rainbow, disability, multicultural, faith, Asian, Pasifika, Māori and others. Along with unions, employee networks can play an important part in representing different viewpoints in the public sector workforce and should be consulted, where relevant.

Some ideas about what great might look like:

- A range of ongoing measurement and listening techniques are used to enhance employee experience and address needs that drive positive workplace culture.
- Employee experience and culture aspirations are aligned to drive delivery of strategic outcomes.

What else would great look like for us?

¹ Government Health & Safety at Work Strategy 2018-2028.

Questions

Currently, how well do you feel our agency performs in this area? What evidence supports that feeling?

Do we consistently involve workers in the development of policies, and in culture-related initiatives?

Are we leveraging union and employee networks effectively in order to ensure different groups of employees are represented and are their perspectives heard and taken into consideration?

Where should we focus our effort?



Workplace Environment

Degree to which a workplace (e.g. organisation and team structure, physical layout, virtual, flexible work arrangements, ways we communicate and share information) enables the desired positive workplace cultures.

The work environment, and the way in which work is done, are important enablers of organisational cultures. Work environment includes the physical and psychosocial work environment, technology and communications infrastructure, and the systems that support the way we work.

Creating positive, safe, diverse and inclusive workplaces relies on all of the above elements. For example, flexible and collaborative working will only work if agencies have technology to support and enable this way of working.

The environment, and/or way in which work is done, can also affect the physical and mental health and wellbeing of employees. For example, poor systems of work (e.g. lack of resources, poorly designed rostering, unreasonable performance measures or timeframes, lack of support systems etc.) can increase the likelihood of negative workplace behaviour, including bullying, which creates increased workplace stress and fatigue, which will also affect the physical and mental health and wellbeing of your workers.

The way teams are structured, where, when and how decisions are made, and how an organisation is resourced are other factors that can either help or hinder the desired culture. Managers with too many direct reports may not be able to provide adequate support, teams with insufficient resource may become stressed and over-worked, governance structures or delegations held at the wrong level may cause frustration or poor decision-making.

Some ideas about what great might look like:

- Consistent alignment between the desired cultural attributes and the different elements of the work environment (e.g. physical layout, flexible work arrangements, communication and information sharing infrastructure).
- Work environment is a source of differentiation and competitive advantage for the workplace of the future.
- Organisational settings (governance style, team structures, delegations etc.) are specifically designed in a way to help align mindsets and behaviours with strategic outcomes.

What else would great look like for us?

Questions

Currently, how well do you feel our agency performs in this area? What evidence supports that feeling?

In what ways are we supporting our desired workplace culture through factors related to psychosocial work environments or systems of work?

What are the potential areas of conflict between the way work is done in our agency and the desired cultural attributes of positive workplaces?

Where should we focus our effort?

Evaluation



The extent to which information is used to inform and evaluate progress towards achieving positive workplace culture.

It is vital that organisations have a learning culture when it comes to responding to, and preventing inappropriate behaviour at work. There are several different ways to learn from previous experience. Centrally recording reports about inappropriate behaviour at work can be helpful because it enables feedback on the effectiveness of an organisation's prevention efforts and can be used to highlight patterns and gaps.

Monitoring other indicators of potential problems with workplace behaviours can also help, such as resignations, turn-over, use of sick leave, Employment Assistance Programme aggregated reports and personal grievances. Exit interviews, internal audits, focus groups, staff appraisals, surveys and engagement with unions can provide valuable insights as well. By gathering this information, organisations can monitor their own progress and take steps towards improvement, including periodically updating policies and procedures.

Agencies can also use data and indicators to help evaluate progress and success.

Some ideas about what great might look like:

- A defined evaluation approach is a key strategic objective and top agency priority.
- Robust measurement mechanism(s) are in place, combining quantitative and qualitative data that is repeated and acted upon regularly.

What else would great look like for us?

Questions

Currently, how well do you feel our agency performs in this area? What evidence supports that feeling?

What types of data do we currently capture that could provide useful insights or indicators? What new data should we capture?

Where should we focus our effort?



PART THREE: PRACTICAL IDEAS AND FURTHER READING

This section includes a number of practical ideas, suggestions and information to help agencies generate ideas as to how they may improve across the various elements of culture change.

Content in this section has been compiled from a range of sources including the Commission's Positive and Safe Workplaces Model Standards, good practice guidance material from WorkSafe NZ, MBIE, Safe Work Australia and the World Health Organisation. Where appropriate, references or links have also been provided. As this programme of work continues, case studies will be developed and provided to agencies to help guide culture change, and share lessons learned.

We encourage you to discuss and share additional ideas based on your own experiences and examples.



Shared Vision, Values and Beliefs



Some ideas to consider

Strategic objectives review

- Agencies regularly refresh strategic goals and objectives. Next time this process occurs, consider whether developing positive culture is important enough to your leaders to explicitly dedicate part of the strategy to that goal. At the least, agencies should ensure that their current strategy does not hinder the ability for the business to develop positive culture.
- Identify specific performance goals and indicators which align to these strategic objectives in order to review progress towards achieving them on a regular basis. For example, a performance goal may be to reduce bullying and harassment. Progress can be measured by monitoring a range of indicators including (but not limited to) actual complaints. Refer to evaluation section for more information on indicators.

Values alignment

- Ensure that all employees understand the core values of your agency's desired culture. Having employee groups lead or contribute to the development of values can help embed values and make them more relevant.
- Look to embed values into relevant documents and processes within the agency, such as job descriptions.
- Provide examples of regular situations that your employees may need to deal with, and how your agency's values should play out in those practical examples (e.g. the decisions made, language used, performance measures). Use these examples as evidence that show actions which support, or work against your stated values.
- An agency's culture is always underpinned by the people that make up that agency. Cultural fit should be equally as crucial in hiring decisions as finding the required capabilities. Consider adding questions in interviews or candidate screening which allow an assessment of whether a potential hire aligns with your values, and whether they would support the goal of maintaining of positive workplace culture.

Leadership alignment

- Create a transparent session which allows important business and culture leaders to share their thoughts on what defines positive culture, and the approaches they believe the organisation could take to demonstrate their values. Giving everyone an equal voice in the room with the top leaders can help break down any preconceived views or "echo chambers" around what the best approaches to develop positive culture are. Identify commonalities to build on, and differences that can be incorporated to support diversity and tolerance.

Other Resources, Links and Additional Information

- Mental Health Foundation resources on creating positive environments
<https://mentalhealth.org.nz/workplaces/working-well-guide-and-resources/creating-positive-environments>



Visible Leadership

Some ideas to consider

Gain commitment

- Consider the most appropriate way for leaders to show commitment to shaping workplace culture within your agency. This may be through such mechanisms as regularly communicating about their commitment to culture initiatives, or leading by example (i.e. being a point of contact for resolving bullying and harassment issues).
- Other practical examples of how agencies can gain leadership commitment include:
 - Facilitate a change readiness assessment for leaders (e.g. ADKAR assessment) to determine where they are at currently with the organisation's culture aspirations. It is important for leaders to be ready to lead the culture change authentically by first addressing their own change readiness.
 - Encourage leaders to explore a 'What is in it for Me' (WIIFM) for the diverse groups within their agency in regard to embedding the values. Share stories of values alignment (either successes or failures) and what was learnt from these.
 - Consider moving away from command and control structures where appropriate to foster leadership at all levels of the organisation.

Leadership training and development

- Provide leadership training to all managers to help them effectively manage and lead people. This can be supported by coaching in how to have difficult conversations and how to adopt a coaching mindset. Review the current training materials used for leadership training, to ensure they are consistent with your values and defined positive culture.
- Develop useful tools that help leaders shape workplace culture, e.g. how to build a team kawa and other frameworks to hold each other to account.
- Train leaders to be cognisant of the inclusion issues that people in their organisation face. Even if a particular leader does not feel they are involved with a role which needs to understand these issues, in reality, any leader should be building understanding of the people that their decisions impact.

Assessment and validation

- Encourage leaders to assess their own capability in relation to the Leadership Success Profile (LSP) and find ways to meet their own development needs through websites such as <https://theCommissionmylsp.govt.nz>
- Use assessment tools such as Leadership Insights or 360 feedback to inform whether leaders are modelling expected behaviours.

Other Resources, Links and Additional Information

- Leadership and Talent – Tools <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/leadershipandtalent-tools/>
- Leadership Development Centre – <https://www ldc.govt.nz/>

Communication, Training and Education



Some ideas to consider

Create, clearly define, and communicate what is, and what is not, appropriate behaviour at work

- Finalise your agency's description of positive workplace culture and define the positive and productive behaviours that support this. Regularly review communications to ensure that core messaging is consistent.
- Ensure these behaviours, along with definitions of inappropriate behaviours, are clearly defined, in writing and accessible (in more than one place) – i.e. code of conduct, organisational policies, offers of employment, internet and intranet etc. and reinforced regularly.
- Ensure training, expectation setting and clear communications reinforce expected behaviours and support employees to have challenging conversations where these expectations are not met. the Commission's Role and Response cards may assist in promoting awareness, and unions are important partners for providing clarity.
- Clearly communicate your agency's expectations of staff and managers' roles and responsibilities regularly and build into regular engagement and programmes, i.e. induction programmes, leadership development, annual events and other interactions.

Build capability

- Agencies should provide the necessary training and education programmes to build capability to support positive workplace culture. This should include but go beyond awareness training to provide strategies and tools. Examples might include training on unconscious bias, speaking up/being an upstander, mental health, tikanga Māori or other cultural capability programmes.

Celebrate success

- Celebrating and sharing stories of what good looks like can be extremely effective. Use communications to share success stories and acknowledge staff and managers who demonstrate desired behaviours. Recognise and promote inclusion and good working relationships.

Assessment and validation

- Use e-learning packages, surveys or other assessment tools to ensure staff and leaders fully understand what positive culture is, their role in creating a positive culture, and their responsibilities and expectations in relation to inappropriate behaviour.

Other Resources, Links and Additional Information

- Worksafe NZ Preventing and responding to bullying at work for PCBUs (<https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/bullying>) – includes definitions on what is and what isn't bullying.
- www.upstand.org



Policies, Procedures and Systems

Some ideas to consider

Agency policies, procedures and systems

- Ensure policies and procedures concerning behaviour at work comply with the law. These should also be consistent and provide an overall framework that is workable.
- As part of this process, agencies should consider whether to have a broad policy covering all behaviours at work or separate policies dealing with particular behaviours, such as bullying, sexual and racial harassment.
- Ensure all other policies and processes reflect the agency's commitment to a positive workplace culture. For example, policies should have a strong emphasis on fostering good working relationships.

Mental health and wellbeing

- Ensure your mental health and wellbeing policies and processes include a prevention focus. The public health model of primary, secondary and tertiary approaches has historically been effective.

Systems to support people speaking up

- It can be difficult for people to raise a concern about inappropriate behaviour at work, so ensure your agency has multiple options for reporting concerns, including both internal and external, as well as formal and informal channels. Channels should not be reliant on courage to speak up.
- Internal channels may include traditional organisational structures, such as managers and HR, and alternatives such as union representatives, employee networks, health and safety representatives or others with specialist training. Consider a direct line to your agency chief executive.
- Provide wrap-around support and active risk assessment strategies for both those raising concerns and those who are the subjects of complaints. Promote protected disclosures.

Mediation and restorative processes

- Explore options for mediation and restorative processes to complement the traditional investigation processes.

Other Resources, Links and Additional Information

- Positive and Safe Workplaces Model Standards: <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/assets/SSC-Site-Assets/IES/Model-Standards-Positive-and-Safe-Workplaces.pdf>
- Speak Up Model Standards <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/speaking-state-services/>
- WorkSafe NZ – Bullying & Harassment Toolkit <https://worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/bullying-prevention-toolbox/>
- MBIE guidelines for employers <https://www.employment.govt.nz/resolving-problems/types-of-problems/>
- WorkSafe NZ Workplace Features Assessment Tool: <https://worksafe.govt.nz/dmsdocument/1966-bullying-workplace-assessment-form>
- Mental Health Organisation Fact Sheet – Positive Work Environments: <https://mentalhealth.org.nz/resources/resource/creating-environments-that-do-not-allow-bullying-to-flourish>

People Processes



Some ideas to consider

Systems

- Ensure adequate people policies, processes and systems are in place to respond to inappropriate behaviour.
- Ensure your performance management procedures support regular feedback on performance (particularly reinforcement of constructive behaviours).
- Ensure that the roles and responsibilities for dealing with any inappropriate behaviours are clearly defined and communicated to all staff, including new starters.

Talent management

- Ensure talent mapping, recruitment and promotions require evidence of desired behaviours – e.g. you may want to use assessment tools such as Leadership Insights or 360 feedback, as one input to inform whether leaders have modelled expected behaviours (refer to LSP leadership capabilities) in previous roles. You can also build questions about behaviour into reference checks.

Workforce strategy

- Ensure your agency's workforce strategy (part of your four-year plan) incorporates activities related to creating a positive workplace culture. Activities may overlap with other key focus areas, e.g. Diversity and Inclusion, Speaking Up, Flexible Working, Gender and Pay Equity etc.

Other Resources, Links and Additional Information

- Te Kawa Mataaho – Public Service Commission Links:
- <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/leadershipandtalent-tools/>
- <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/resources/workforcestrategy-guidance/>
- <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/our-work/diversity-and-inclusion/>
- <https://www.publicservice.govt.nz/our-work/integrityandconduct/>
- Leadership Development Centre – <https://www.ldc.govt.nz/>
- MBIE Website – <https://www.employment.govt.nz/resolving-problems/>
- MBIE Website – <https://www.employment.govt.nz/resolving-problems/>

Worker Engagement, Participation and Voice



Some ideas to consider

Worker engagement, participation and representation (WEPR)

- The Government's *Health & Safety at Work Strategy 2018 – 2028* puts workers at the heart of the system. This is because a genuine commitment to involving workers at all levels is critical to create healthier, safer and more engaged work and workplaces. Refer to the strategy for ideas and further information.

Union engagement

- Unions play an important role in ensuring employees are represented. Agencies and unions can develop Worker Participation Agreements which outline the framework in which the parties will work together. Some agencies have developed High Performance, High Engagement (HPHE) relationship documents which commit to improving the way unions and agencies collaborate.

Inclusion and support for all groups of employees

- Look to develop a kaupapa Māori group within your agency that can support the development of programmes of work which are in line with tikanga and the values of Te Tiriti O Waitangi. Clearly define what types of initiatives only require a Māori lens, or advisory in their development, versus those initiatives that should be fully driven by a Māori view.
- Certain groups of employees may be more vulnerable, while other groups of workers may be more at risk. For example, Māori, Pasifika, disabled, LGBTQ+, younger and older workers, as well as migrant workers (especially if seasonal or temporary) can find it harder to speak up. Your agency should ensure they have strategies to effectively engage with and support workers with greater needs.
- Employee led networks may provide a useful way of engaging with certain groups of employees.

Other Resources, Links and Additional Information

- WorkSafe NZ info on worker engagement, participation and representation – <https://worksafe.govt.nz/laws-and-regulations/operational-policy-framework/worksafe-positions/worker-engagement-participation-and-representation/>
- NZ Government Employee Networks – <https://employeenetworks.govt.nz>
- *Government Health & Safety at Work Strategy 2018-2028* <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/assets/69361d5a98/health-safety-at-work-strategy-2018-2028.pdf>

Workplace Environment



Some ideas to consider

Risk management

- Conduct a Health & Safety Risk Assessment to identify workplace activities and factors that may cause physical or psychological harm within your workplace, and to consider how they enable or disable positive culture. The review should include physical work environment, proximity to support, organisational and team structures, systems, expectations, job demands and resourcing, as these can all impact the physical and psychological wellbeing of your staff. Put in place appropriate processes and controls to adequately manage risk.

Governance

- Ensure governance for any culture transformation programmes includes representation from across the organisation and is sponsored by a senior leader who has influence and authority across the organisation. A positive culture is an organisational imperative and enabler so should be driven by the organisation rather than one specific business unit or function.
- Governance drives the way our organisations change. In order to ensure that these changes are in line with our aspirations around culture, it is important that governance at all levels includes a lens of organisational values, and positive culture. To support this, consider building in mandatory questions around positive workplaces in decision-making templates.

Delegations

- Anyone holding delegated authority for decisions that impact the organisation should be well-informed about the agency's commitments to positive culture. Appropriate delegations that reinforce effective decision making at the right level are an important determinant of a positive working environment.

Technology and communications systems

- Inadequate systems, including technology and communications channels, can create unnecessary frustration and/or make it difficult to communicate with staff in a meaningful and timely manner. Use a survey, focus groups or other ways to gather information to inform how your technology and communications systems support or hinder positive workplaces.

Other Resources, Links and Additional Information

- World Health Organisation Healthy Workplace Framework (https://www.who.int/occupational_health/healthy_workplace_framework.pdf)
- Worksafe NZ – <https://worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/managing-risks/how-to-manage-work-risks/>
- <https://worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/work-related-health/>
- Safe Work Australia – Principles of good work design (<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au>)
- Health and Safety: A Good Practice Guide for Public Service Chief Executives (https://www.healthandsafety.govt.nz/assets/Documents/GH_and_SL_Safety_Guide_2018_WEB.pdf)



Evaluation

Some ideas to consider

Data and indicators

- Assess what data and information could be used to provide insights and to indicate potential problems (Worksafe NZ – Preventing and responding to bullying at work for PCBUs includes a section on assessing the likelihood of bullying).
- Insights gained from reporting and investigation of incidents can be used to inform and develop strategy.
- Any indicators used for performance monitoring should consider the 12 characteristics of good indicators (these are outlined in the Government Health & Safety Lead – Health and Safety Indicators and Measures Knowledge Bank).

Control measures

- Monitor the effectiveness of the controls you have in place to help manage inappropriate behaviour (e.g. policies, processes, systems, relationships, reporting, training, communications, education, support, reporting).

Positive and safe culture

- Culture assessment can be embedded into workplace engagement surveys and other feedback mechanisms which allow tracking over time. Consider supplementing this with focus groups/interviews to gain more specific feedback, and allow those who prefer to engage face to face to be heard.

Other Resources, Links and Additional Information

- Worksafe NZ – Preventing and responding to bullying at work for PCBUs: [worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/bullying/good-practice-guidelines-preventing-and-responding-to-bullying-at-work/](https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/bullying/good-practice-guidelines-preventing-and-responding-to-bullying-at-work/)
- Government Health & Safety Lead – Health and Safety Indicators and Measures Knowledge Bank (<https://www.healthandsafety.govt.nz/reports/good-practice-guides/health-and-safety-indicators-and-measures-knowledge-bank/>)

PART FOUR: AGENCY PLANNING

Next Steps

List the top five things we could do to make the biggest difference.

1

2

3

4

5

Agreed actions (priorities) for the next 12 months

1

2

3

4

What areas would your agency would like some support with (from Positive Workplace Cultures Programme and/or from other agencies?)

